



U.S. Department
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News Release

Providence VA Medical Center
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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This Suicide Prevention Month, Learn to #BeThere for Veterans

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, the Providence VA Medical Center is highlighting VA's #BeThere campaign, encouraging community leaders, colleagues, and Veterans' families and friends to help prevent suicide by showing their support.

Suicide is a national public health issue affecting communities nationwide, with more than 45,000 Americans, including more than 6,000 Veterans, dying by suicide every year. But suicide is preventable and VA is using a community-driven approach to prevent suicide, and finding innovative ways to deliver support and care to Veterans whenever and wherever they need it.

"Veteran suicide is a national tragedy. VA has prevention and response therapies proven to be effective, but most Veterans we are losing aren't active with VA health care," said Dr. Susan MacKenzie, director of the Providence VAMC. "We need the community to help us ensure that whenever a Veteran is in crisis, they know that people care and how to get help."

The Providence VAMC is participating in several events during Suicide Prevention Month:

1. Free public screening of "The S Word," Sept. 10 from 6:20 to 7:20 p.m. at Avon Cinema, 260 Thayer Street, Providence, R.I. Following the screening, Dr. Nathan Stein, a clinical psychologist and suicide prevention coordinator at the Providence VAMC, will lead a discussion about suicide prevention. For tickets, please visit [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search for "The S Word" in Providence.
2. Vet Center Veteran Art Exhibit. Open display: Sept. 4 – 29; Reception with Q&A: Sept. 10, 5 - 9 p.m. Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Ln, Warwick, R.I. Come celebrate the

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accomplishments of Vets and discuss the therapeutic aspects of art. Call 401-739-0167 for more info.

3. Annual Veteran Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk, Sept. 11. The walk will start at noon. Join Providence VAMC employees, volunteers and Veterans to walk from the patio area behind the main hospital at 830 Chalkstone Ave. to Davis Park in Providence. Refreshments, water bottles and suicide-prevention-awareness items. Please #BeThere for support!

Everyone can #BeThere to help prevent Veteran suicide by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion and care to Veterans in need, and offering support. Actions anyone can take include:

1. Reach out to the Veterans in your life to show them you care. Send a check-in text, plan to get together or simply call to ask, "How are you?"
2. Learn about the warning signs of suicide, such as feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, rage or anger, sleeplessness, mood swings, alcohol or drug abuse, or withdrawing from family and friends. If someone is thinking about hurting or killing themselves, or talking about it, that's a crisis that requires immediate attention. More information is on the Veterans Crisis Line website at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/education/signs-of-crisis>
3. Contact VA's Coaching into Care program if you are worried about a Veteran loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support. More information at <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>
4. Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255 or chat online at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat>
5. VA medical centers offer same-day access to mental health care for Veterans who need it during business hours, and VA emergency departments are open 24/7 for Veterans with urgent mental health care needs outside of regular business hours.